

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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/096 W

-----123741 100416Z /72

R 091557Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3867
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AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV PINT MO
SUBJECT: FIRST ANNUAL COLLOQUIUM ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN MOROCCO

REF: (A) RABAT 6426, (B) STATE 286068

1. ADMIDST MUCH PUBLICITY AND FANFARE, THE FIRST ANNUAL COLLOQUIUM ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT TOOK PLACE IN MARRAKECH DECEMBER 1-5 UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. THE KING HIMSELF PRESIDED OVER THE OPENING CEREMONIES, EMPHASIZING IN HIS SPEECH THE NEED FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION BY THE CITIZEN IN GOVERNMENT. DURING THE COLLOQUIUM, OTHER HIGH GOM OFFICIALS - INCLUDING THE MINISTERS OF INTERIOR, EQUIPMENT, AND COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PLAN - SPOKE BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY.

2. 160 MOROCCAN DELEGATES REPRESENTING PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES, MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, AND AUTONOMOUS AND COMMUNAL CENTERS PARTICIPATED. IN ADDITION, DELEGATIONS FROM TUNISIA, MAURITANIA, EGYPT, ITALY, FRANCE, AND THE UNITED STATES ATTENDED.

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3. THE U.S. DELEGATES, MAYOR JOHN OLIVIER OF SUNSET AND MAYOR ELMO BROUSSARD OF CANKTON, LOUISIANA, WERE OFFICIAL GUESTS OF THE GOM, AS WERE THE OTHER FOREIGN DELEGATES. THE GOM FURNISHED TRAVEL TO AND FROM THE U.S. AND MADE ALL ARRANGEMENTS IN MOROCCO. FOLLOWING THE COLLOQUIUM THE MAYORS WERE FURTHER FETED BY THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND ACCORDED A TOUR INCLUDING

CASABLANCA, RABAT, FES AND BENI MELLAL. DURING CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY AND CONGEN CASABLANCA OFFICERS, THEY EXPRESSED WARM PRAISE FOR MOROCCAN HOSPITALITY. GOM WAS OBVIOUSLY VERY PLEASE TO HAVE PROFESSIONALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY WELL-QUALIFIED U.S. PARTICIPANTS.

4. THE COLLOQUIUM, WHICH RECEIVED MASSIVE COVERAGE IN THE NATIONAL MEDIA AND SOME ATTENTION IN THE FRENCH PRESS, WAS CLEARLY A USEFUL PUBLIC RELATIONS VEHICLE. COMING ALMOST EXACTLY ONE YEAR AFTER THE 1976 LOCAL ELECTIONS, IT HELPED TO UNDERLINE THE GOM'S DEDICATION TO :AREFULLY ORCHESTRATED) GRASS-ROOTS, PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY. BY BRINGING IN REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL BODIES IN THE SAHARA, THE GOM ALSO ATTEMPTED TO POINT UP THE FORMER SPANISH SAHARA'S SUCCESSFUL - AND DEMOCRATIC - REINTEGRATION INTO THE MOROCCAN MOTHERLAND.

5. MORE CONCRETELY, THE COLLOQUIUM ALSO PROVIDED THE GOM WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO TRY TO BRING INT LINE OCCASIONALLY UNRULY LOCAL COUNCILS (THOSE DOMINATED BY POLITICAL PARTIES RATHER THAN PRO-GOVERNMENT INDEPENDENTS). DURING THE CLOSING CEREMONIES FOR THE COLLOQUIUM, DR. MOHAMED BENHIMA, MINISTER OF INTERIOR, ANNOUNCED THAT A LAW WAS BEING PREPARED WHICH WOULD INCREASE THE POWERS OF THE PREFECTURAL AND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES. SUCH A LAW CAN BE EXPECTED TO REINFORCE THE LATTER ASSEMBLIES, PREDOMINANTLY CONSERVATIVE AND PRO-GOVERNMENT, AT THE EXPENSE OF THE LESS DISCIPLINED, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LOWER-LEVEL MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNAL BODIES.
MOFFAT

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
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